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RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 0254  
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 1867  
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 2435  
RUEHMT/AMCONSUL MONTREAL 0344  
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC 1285  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 001510

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/29/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [HA](#)

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER DISCUSSES TRAVAILS OF OFFICE,  
DEALING WITH PREVAL

REF: PORT AU PRINCE 1414

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Classified By: Ambassador Janet A. Sanderson. Reason: E.O. 12958 1.4  
(b), (d)

11. (C) Summary: Prime Minister Pierre-Louis says privately that she is frustrated by President Preval's refusal thus far to give her the space she needs to govern. He has yet to sign off on her plan to visit Washington, attempting to reshuffle her cabinet without her consent, and listening to an ever smaller circle of advisors rather than her government. She is discouraged by the low quality of Haiti's political leadership, the ubiquitous corruption, and the unhealthy influence of her predecessor, Jacques Edouard Alexis. This sudden drop in the PM's confidence in the President bodes ill for her government's prospects unless and until she can persuade Preval to back off. She is prepared to do so, she says, but knows that her old friend's habits are hard to change. End summary.

12. (C) The Ambassador hosted Prime Minister Michele Pierre-Louis (MPL) for breakfast October 24. The two have agreed to meet every week informally as their schedules permit. The Prime Minister was in a clearly dispirited mood, saying her job is far harder than she ever imagined it would be. She is unable to function both as Prime Minister and Minister of Justice. She said that Jean Josef Exhume, a former Minister of Justice, will be named to this position by presidential arret within the week. She has yet to put together a personal office that is truly hers: many of the people she would like to bring into her Cabinet can't cope with the governmental salary and are afraid, she says, of the ramifications of working in the government.

13. (C) The Prime Minister conceded that, two months into her tenure, President Preval has yet to give her the space she needs to establish her own authority. He has proposed reshuffling her cabinet with an eye to pushing Foreign Minister Alrich Nicolas out of office and replacing him with the current Minister of Planning, Jean Max Bellerive. At the recent Francophonie summit in Quebec, Preval visibly snubbed Nicolas, introducing his "counselor/fiancee" Elizabeth ('Babette') Delatour as his foreign policy advisor.

According to MPL, Bellerive is to be replaced by the Director General in the Prime Ministry, Ronald Baudin, a protoge of former Prime Minister Alexis. (Note: None of these changes has been announced and subsequent to drafting of this cable, the PM privately told the Ambassador that she had told Preval "frankly" she would not accept any changes in her Cabinet at this point. She claims he has backed down. However, the Canadian Embassy Political Counselor confirmed to PolCouns this account of the Francophonie summit, which he attended. There are reports from Quebec that the president was drinking heavily while in Canada. End note)

14. (C) MPL also noted that she is not able to commit to a Washington visit any time soon as Preval has scheduled a visit to the Dominican Republic and other travel. The Prime Minister said she would have to "sit down" with the President and discuss this issue; she wants to get to Washington as soon as possible, saying it is her top travel priority. There are those, she conceded, who believe that Preval does not want her in the foreign spotlight.

15. (C) The Prime Minister said she is appalled by the level of corruption and the low quality of Haiti's political leadership. She suspects that Preval is already working with Alexis to secure him a strong position in the 2011 Presidential elections; the two, she noted, are back together. Furthermore, she notes. Preval has increasingly isolated himself and listens to none of his palace advisors except Delatour -- who Pierre-Louis says is hostile to her. She termed Preval's meeting with IBRD President Zoellick October 22 a disaster. Preval expounded historical arguments for why the World Bank owed Haiti more assistance, which piqued Zoellick into a protracted counter-argument. The two got nowhere and during their joint press conference, only

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Zoellick talked.

16. (C) The Prime Minister also feels pressured by Parliament. During her seven weeks in office, various ministers have been called to testify before parliament sixteen times. She herself has testified seven times. She has told the Presidents of both chambers that she and her government cannot function if they are hauled before parliament this frequently.

17. (C) Pierre-Louis reports frustration with the Provisional Electoral Council, saying that she has called the president of that body to task for not moving quicker on elections. The CEP claims it can do nothing until the President sets an election date. She predicted that President Preval would seek to merge the delayed Senate elections with the next set of elections scheduled for late 2009, for the next tier of the Senate and the entire Chamber of Deputies. The PM said she has firmly told the President there can be no amendment of the constitution until elections have produced a full Senate.

18. (C) Comment: The bloom is off the rose as Pierre-Louis begins to confront the challenge of governing Haiti. She appears clearly disillusioned by her old friend Rene Preval, telling me that she did not expect him to act this way at this point in her tenure. Her account indicates Preval is reverting to type intense micromanagement of the government and reliance on an increasingly narrow group of advisors MPL has signaled to us, and Preval, that she has no option but to deal with him firmly and move forward. The question is: for how long?  
SANDERSO